

EDITORIAL COMMENT



THE CONVENTION IN CHICAGO.

WE had anticipated a very interesting meeting in Chicago, but we were not prepared for the hospitality provided by the Chicago nurses for the entertainment of the delegates and guests.

We have found in conversing with a number of the younger delegates who were attending the convention for the first time that this feature of hospitality impressed them quite as forcibly as it did the more experienced members.

Under the very able direction of Miss Fulmer, the chairman, the "Committee on Arrangements" did their work most thoroughly and well, and the same can be said of the ushers, who handled the large audiences with great skill.

The nurse who went alone, a total stranger to officers and members, met with a cordial greeting at the hands of some one Chicago nurse, who looked after her wants and guided her about this great city of magnificent distances in a way that to more than one dispelled all feeling of loneliness. To those women who were present at the first "International Congress of Nurses," held in Chicago in June, 1893, this convention had special interest and significance. That first body of women came together as strangers, not only personally unknown to each other, but unfamiliar with the work each was striving to accomplish in her own small way; but there were among them women of notable ability (some of whom have since passed over to the "silent majority"), who were enabled to evolve plans which have since borne fruit in many directions, the system of organizations, of which the "Associated Alumnae" is greatest, being the direct result of their deliberations. This fifth convention of the Associated Alumnae just closed was made up almost entirely of women of the younger generation, there being not more than half a dozen of the "old war-horses" present; but this group of women came together as friends, all having the same object, and all showing in a greater or less degree a knowledge of that parliamentary procedure so necessary for the conduct of a large meeting.

The absence of Mrs. Hunter Robb, who has been the president of the association since the beginning, was very greatly felt, and we heard frequently the remark, "Isn't it strange to have a meeting without Miss Dock?" but so faithfully have their labors been performed that others are now able to carry on their work.

This was especially noticeable in the very skilful way in which Miss Damer, the president, conducted the meetings, showing an absolutely non-partisan spirit during the most animated discussions, and carrying the meetings through in a judicious and dignified manner.

So well did she fill the office that she was nominated for reelection, and had she allowed her name to stand, would undoubtedly have been elected for another year.

All of the social functions, of which mention has been made in the report of the secretary, were, each in a different way, very delightfully carried out, the only unfortunate feature being that, owing to distance and the number of entertainments provided, it was impossible for any one person to attend them all. It added greatly to the economy of time and convenience of the delegates

that the meetings were held in the hall of the Lexington Hotel, where the guests were staying, thus making possible a great deal of informal visiting among delegates and guests in the adjoining reception-rooms, which was one of the most charming features of the occasion.

The grand climax was reached in the luncheon, held on Friday, the second day of the convention, in the banquet-hall of the hotel, at which three hundred and eighty delegates and visitors were present. A very novel feature of this luncheon was the presence of a number of Chicago's most distinguished physicians and surgeons, with members of the Boards of Women Managers of several of the training-schools of Chicago.

There were flowers in profusion, music, speeches, and pretty gowns, and no casual onlooker would have dreamed of the serious import of the business which had brought this group of women together. We cannot leave this subject without expressing the appreciation which we know was felt by every nurse present of the cordial welcome extended to the convention by Miss Julia Lathrop, one of Chicago's prominent women and an active worker in "Hull House." In her address, which opened the convention, and as "toast-mistress" at the luncheon, one could not fail to recognize that peculiar sympathy with the nurse's life, and appreciation of the things for which we are all striving, which is so encouraging to us as women, and so rarely found among women whose lines of life are so different from our own.

ADVANCED METHODS.

DR. CABOT's description of the very radical changes in the methods of instruction which have been adopted in the Training-School of the Massachusetts General Hospital in the last three years are of especial interest to our readers who are engaged in training-school work.

The plan which is being followed there, of paying physicians to give regularly and systematically that part of the instruction which usually has been divided among the members of a large staff, is a most practical improvement over the old method, where each man, giving his services gratuitously, too often keeps his appointment or not, as suits his convenience.

Still, this method has some of the disadvantages of the old, inasmuch as the nurse is being required to receive her theoretical instruction at the same time that she is performing the difficult manual labor of the wards, her hours on actual duty, counting her classes as duty, remaining unchanged.

We are strongly of the opinion that nurses should be taught theoretical medicine before they enter the wards of a hospital, and that the time they serve in the wards should be devoted to the study of practical nursing.

Looking at this question squarely, from the stand-point of the hospital, the gain is quite as much in its favor as for the advantage of the nurse. Under the present arrangement, of taking nurses off duty to attend lectures, classes, and examinations, the patient suffers great inconvenience, not necessarily from lack of service, but because of the change of service which this system necessitates.

Patients and doctors complain, but under the present régime the nurse is entitled to the instruction which the hospital has pledged itself to give in return for her services, and she must be given a certain amount of consideration. On the other hand, when lectures and classes are given in the evening, after ten or twelve hours of hard manual labor, the injustice to the nurse is obvious, as she is then in no condition, physically, to profit by such instruction.

Miss Dolliver, we know, has been trying experiments on several lines, but

even with the improvements which she has been able to inaugurate in her own school, she is one of the "Committee of Superintendents" in Boston who is working for the establishment at Simmons College of the preliminary course for nurses, of which mention has already been made in these pages.

THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

MENTION is made in another column of the reorganization, with change of name, of the *Nursing Record* of London, which is to appear July 1 under the title of the *British Journal of Nursing*. Under this name the journal will more widely represent the interests of British nurses, and, joining hands with THE AMERICAN JOURNAL OF NURSING, the two magazines will stand together for the principles for which the English-speaking nurses of the world are striving to-day, —namely, greater uniformity of standards for admission to training-schools, more thorough and advanced preliminary instruction, State registration, and a recognized professional status for nurses.

To the *Nursing Record* the profession owes much of the inspiration that has led to its present degree of development and progress, and to the *British Journal of Nursing* we may look for all advance movements to be heralded, every abuse denounced, and credit awarded where credit is due.

As a matter of convenience, our subscribers may send their subscriptions to the *British Journal of Nursing* through the publishing office of this journal. The amount, which includes the foreign postage, is nine shillings (two dollars and twenty-five cents), and should be sent in the form of post-office order or draft, never in cash or stamps. This will save the annoyance and trouble of obtaining a foreign money-order, and the subscription for both journals can be sent at the same time. No nurse can claim to be abreast of the times who does not read both of these journals, the British and the American.

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP.

IN the secretary's report of the New York State Nurses' Association, printed in the May number, will be found instructions for application, both for organizations and individuals. Applications should be sent to the chairman of the Eligibility Committee, Miss Anna C. Maxwell, Presbyterian Hospital, New York City, N. Y.

The next meeting is to be held in Utica on the third Tuesday in July. Organizations that are eligible and individual nurses should come into the society while it is in the first stages of development and have a voice in all of the vital questions that will come up for consideration. The eligibility lines are broad. The graduates of general hospitals, without regard to size, and the graduates of the New York State hospitals for the insane make a representative body of nurses in whose hands the initiatory lines of organization may well be trusted.

A WORD TO OUR CONTRIBUTORS.

ALWAYS after putting out a number of the JOURNAL we wait with bated breath for the expressions of commendation and condemnation that we know will pour in upon us within the first week after circulation. Fortunately for our happiness, the expressions of appreciation far outweigh the letters of criticism, but we are just as thankful for the latter when made in a friendly spirit. The frequent bone of contention is because of mistakes in our spelling of the names

of people and places. Now the editor is a Yankee and a pretty good guesser, but there are some kinds of writing that would puzzle a magician, and frequently the most cultivated hand is the most difficult to read. We must again ask our contributors to help us to avoid such errors as much as possible by being quite careful to make the letters of *names* very distinct, even to print the names that are uncommon, so that we may be spared the humiliation of mistakes of this kind. That a space shall be left at the top and side of each page and that only one side of the sheet shall be written upon is also very essential.

It seems necessary occasionally to remind some of our readers that this JOURNAL is not a newspaper, that gossip or personal criticism of a malicious nature are not given space in its pages, and that nothing is recognized that is not signed by the writer's name and address in full.

We have in hand at present a number of communications and a package of photographs unaccompanied by name or address.

THE ACTION OF THE BUFFALO NURSES' ASSOCIATION.

So THE Buffalo Nurses' Association, not being able to dictate arbitrarily to the nurses of New York State, have decided to "take their dolls and go home." There is a pettishness in this action that we are sorry to see, but as the question of eligibility was decided by a body of women including delegates who represented a constituency of more than nine hundred nurses, it is certainly according to the principle of American liberty that the "majority" should rule. No one small group of women can expect always to lead; it will be sometimes one party, sometimes another, according to the wisdom and justice of the methods employed and the principles advanced. It is hardly to be expected that nurses in their organizations should be exempt from the kind of discord that seems to creep into all women's societies sooner or later, but perhaps such differences are the most healthy kind of a stimulant for good work. The question of what is best for the nurses of the State can well be left to the intelligence of the majority.

THE JULY NUMBER.

It was the voice of the meeting that the July issue of the JOURNAL should be made a "Convention Number," giving all of its space for that purpose, publishing the papers read, with the proceedings, and the revised membership list. New organizations who have not already done so must send their membership lists to the secretary immediately, and revisions of the old list should be made at once.

The paper read by Miss Ross on preliminary training at the Johns Hopkins Hospital is so similar to the one which we had received from Miss Nutting, announced to appear in June, on the same subject, that we have thought best to substitute for it Dr. Cabot's paper on recent changes in the curriculum of the Massachusetts General Hospital, holding Miss Nutting's paper for the "Convention Issue."

Miss Richards's "council" paper, having already been given in the May number of the JOURNAL, will not be reprinted in July.

We reserve comment on the business proceedings of the convention until the report appears in our pages.

As there is to be no separate report printed this year, orders for extra numbers of the July issue should be sent to the publishing office not later than June 15.